



**My family,  
from our  
recent cruise:  
Neville, Sherri,  
Brett and  
Gardner,  
Cohen, Olivia,  
Kinsey, Trey  
and King.**

## **Saying goodbye...**

*By Sherri Gardner Howell*

**From the time I was 6 years old until I was about 10, I knew my mother would sit down every Monday through Friday at 12:30 p.m. She would put her lunch on the TV tray, turn the channel to CBS and watch “As the World Turns.”**

**I never see a revolving globe without thinking of her.**

**Our worlds turned a lot as I grew up. It turned a lot after I grew up, and it is, thankfully, turning still. Transitions and milestones come around during some of those rotations. Some we are happy to see, others, not-so-much.**

**I am reaching a transition today, as this is the last Rhymes and Reasons column I will write for the News Sentinel. It’s hard, but it’s time to move on.**

**The first Rhymes and Reasons column – thanks to former features editor Susan Alexander for coming up with the name –appeared in the brand new Family and Religion section of the News Sentinel on Nov. 18, 1988. I was**

taking a break from working fulltime to spend more time with my children, who were 5 and 8 at the time. I started working at the Sentinel writing paid obituaries when I was a junior at the University of Tennessee in 1975. I moved to editorial as an unpaid intern in 1976 for senior year course credit, and Harold Harlow hired me when I graduated in June.

In that first eight-page Family and Religion section, the brainchild of then editor Harry Moskos, Amy McRary wrote a story about helping children deal with divorce, and Bill Maples did a centerpiece on Dr. Donald Hoke's ministry at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church. A few pages into the section, Carl Vines reviewed the Clarence Brown Theatre production of "A Christmas Carol."

My column was about how holiday family memories revolve around food. I interviewed friends and acquaintances and reported on their Thanksgiving and other holiday memories. It was in later columns that I first began to share with Rhymes and Reasons readers about my own family.

What a blessing that has been! I have the best readers and the most faithful. When the News Sentinel did a "columnist survey" in 2015, you voted me No. 1 in Daily Features and No. 1 among women. Your votes probably kept me around through all the changes the paper is going through.

From recognitions in the grocery store or on the soccer fields, I have learned so much from you and always been buoyed by your kindness. You have helped me, truly helped me, through some rough patches with losses and transitions. I still have many of your letters and cards, the "before email" notes, and I have appreciated every electronic word of encouragement since we embraced technology.

I do not remember the name of the lady who stood in a drizzling rain on a soccer field sideline and told me, "I always feel like you have been looking in my window at my family when you write. I feel connected when I read your words." It remains my very favorite comment about my work.



*Grandson Cohen Wilburn*



*Grandson King Howell*



*Grandson Gardner Howell*

**Feeling connected doesn't come easy today. Even as I hit "Like" a dozen times on Facebook, I often would just love to pick up the phone or sit across the table with that friend and catch up in another way.**

**But the world turns. My children are parents now. I am finding that being a grandmother is as incredible and life-altering as being a parent is. Still, it gets harder to feel I am connecting with you. When I sat to write my column for Mother's Day, I found myself thinking, "Have I already said this? I have probably written 25 Mother's Day columns..."**

**The world turns, and I want to go out "on the top of my game," as they say in sports.**

**I have been privileged to share my life, some rhymes and reasons, with you readers through these many years. We have laughed, a lot, I hope, cried a little and worked through some mommy issues. I know from readership surveys and anecdotal experiences that my readership is mostly female, moms and grandmothers a lot like me, and I thank you for your faithfulness. I do want to also thank Congressman Jimmy Duncan and David Rader, two men who never, ever failed to let me know that they were "My biggest fans."**

**Transitions are rarely easy. But, as the world turns, they are sometimes necessary.**